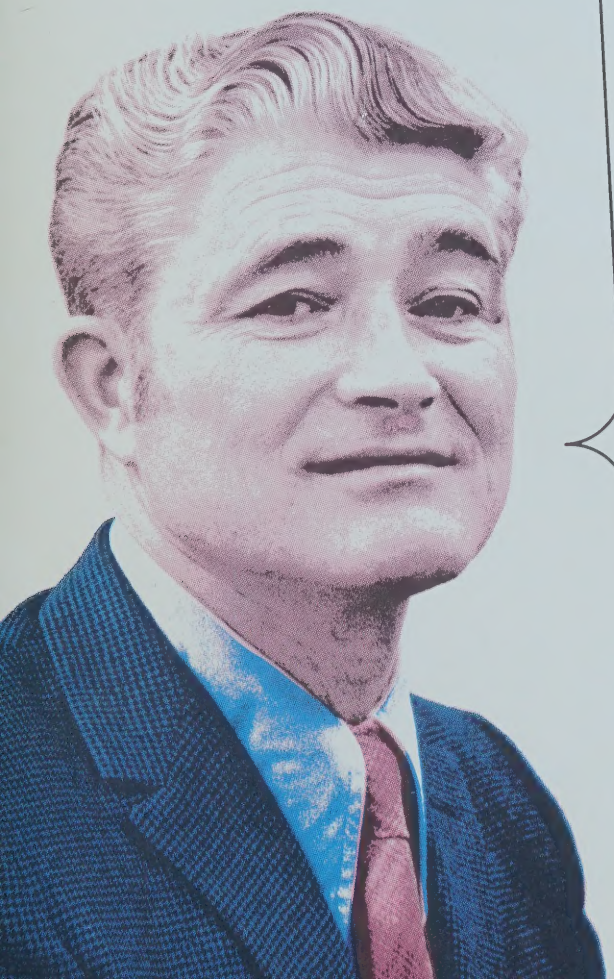
Alberta
Human Resources
Research Council
CA2ALHR
72A45
c.2
ALBERTA PROVINCIAL LIBRARY
C2
FEB 14 1972
EDMONTON
CA2 ALHR 1972A45
Alberta, 1971: Toward a Social Audit - a
Report to the People of Alberta A 2
3 3398 00311 7016
LIBRARY
19

Alberta, 1971: toward a social audit

A Report to the People of Alberta about The Quality of Life in Alberta.

By: L. W. Downey, Director
The Human Resources
Research Council of Alberta

January, 1972



foreword

This report to the people of Alberta is one of several outcomes of an exploratory project in social accounting in Alberta. The project had a number of purposes: (1) to begin the development of a comprehensive conceptual system for social accounting; (2) to compile an inventory of useful available data; (3) to assess the prospects for the development of social accounting in the future; (4) to prepare a preliminary social audit for the information of the people of Alberta.

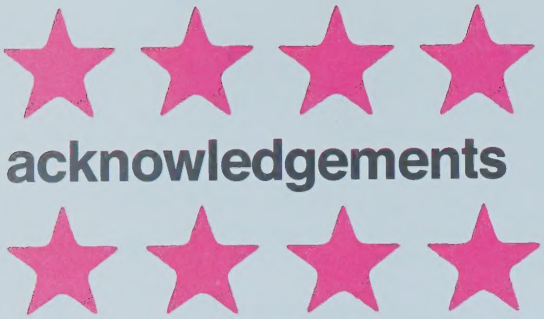
This report is that preliminary social audit. Other products of the exploratory project are listed in the acknowledgements below.

The year 1971 has proved to be a timely selection for this preliminary, baseline report on the quality of life in Alberta. For the report attempts to take stock of the human condition, to add up the social balance sheets as it were, and thereby, to establish a bench mark against which to measure future progress or retrogression. *What time could be more appropriate for the establishment of such a bench mark than the year of the changing of the government?*

Several explanatory comments ought to preface this report. It is brief—and deliberately so. Though the materials were selectively distilled from literally hundreds of pages of research reports, this resulting document contains little by way of academic disclaimers, qualifiers, or jargon. Hopefully, this makes it less forbidding and more readable. It is also highly selective in its content. It deals only with those aspects of life style and quality for which fairly hard and reliable indicators are available. Though this does not guarantee the validity of the inferences which are drawn (for these the author must take full responsibility), it does ensure a degree of authenticity for the actual data included.

Finally, it should be noted that the report aims more at breadth than at depth. As far as we know, it is something of a pioneering attempt at taking stock of a society on a broad, comprehensive basis—rather than an in-depth, fragmentary one. Admittedly, such a comprehensive approach is full of hazards; the greatest of these is superficiality. But we believe that comprehensive, non-fragmented assessments provide the starting points essential to comprehensive, non-fragmented policy-making. So the attempt simply had to be made.

If this report and its companions serve even as a modest beginning to this approach to policy research, they will have served their purpose.



acknowledgements

In the preparation of this report, I have drawn liberally upon the works of many, many people.

First, as indicated, a number of companion products have resulted directly from our exploratory project in social accounting. These are as follows:

A. Published Reports

Armit, R. E., *Employment and Income in Alberta, 1970,* (In Press).

Ingram, E. J., West, L. W., *A Review of Educational Opportunity: Alberta, 1970,* (Edmonton, HRRC, 1971).

Larson, L. E., *The Family in Alberta,* (Edmonton, HRRC, 1971).

Riffel, J. A., *Social Reporting in Alberta: Problems and Prospects,* (In Preparation).

B. Unpublished Papers

Emery, G. J., *Religion and Culture in Alberta,* (Mimeo).

Gray, D., *Participation and Alienation,* (Mimeo).

Jackson, M. W., *Personal Freedoms,* (Mimeo).

Lederer, K., *A Review of Poverty in Alberta,* (Mimeo).

McDaniel, S. A., *Physical and Mental Well-Being of Albertans,* (Mimeo).

Matthews, V. M., *Legal Justice in Alberta,* (Mimeo).

Riffel, J. A., *Recreation and the Arts,* (Mimeo).

Riffel, J. A., *Science and Technology,* (Mimeo).

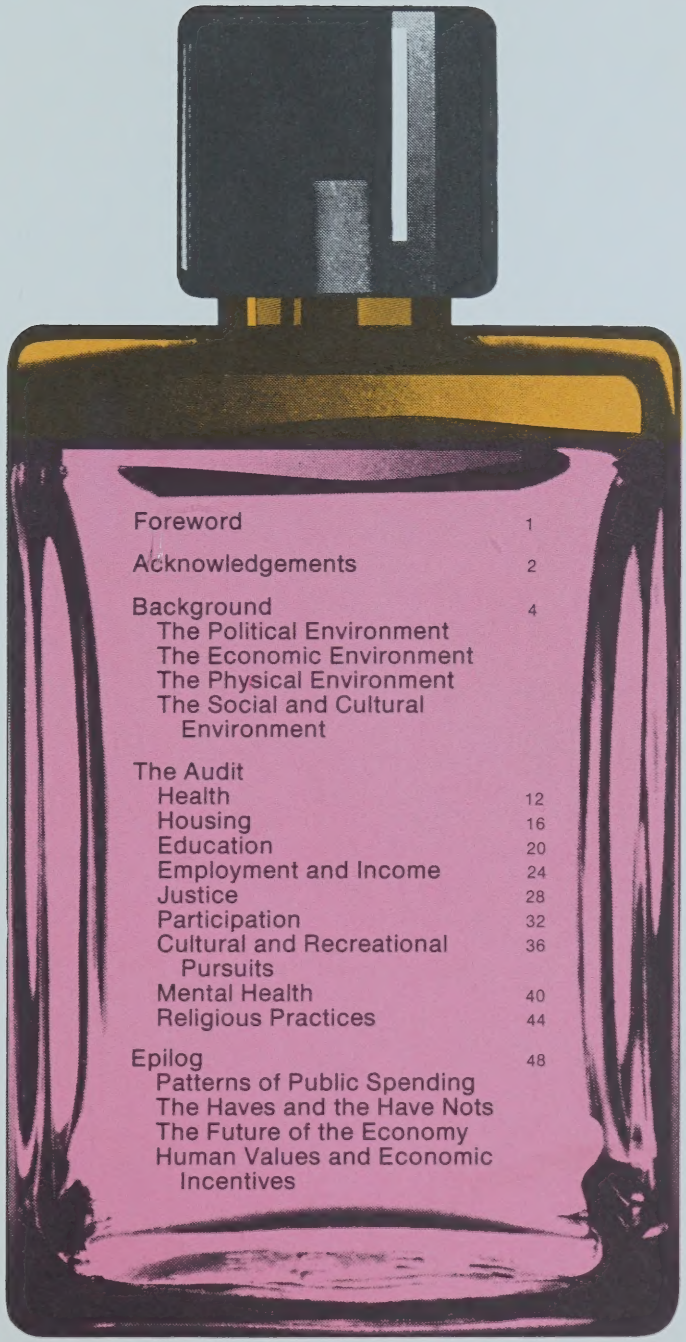
Taylor, L., *Man's Environment,* (Mimeo).

In addition, I have drawn materials from other HRRC publications, from reports of Government Departments and from a host of other sources too numerous to mention. For purposes of brevity and simplicity, I have refrained from referencing these sources in the text; but I express general acknowledgement and gratitude for their use.

Finally, I acknowledge the contributions of Mr. David Gray who made the first effort to pull together the rather fragmented ideas and statistics that were used in this report.

L. W. Downey,
Edmonton.
January, 1972.

contents



Foreword 1

Acknowledgements 2

Background 4
- The Political Environment
- The Economic Environment
- The Physical Environment
- The Social and Cultural Environment

The Audit
- Health 12
- Housing 16
- Education 20
- Employment and Income 24
- Justice 28
- Participation 32
- Cultural and Recreational Pursuits 36
- Mental Health 40
- Religious Practices 44

Epilog 48
- Patterns of Public Spending
- The Haves and the Have Nots
- The Future of the Economy
- Human Values and Economic Incentives

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE, AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS. THEY HAVE THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES: AND ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS,

(SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*)

This report is about people. Over 1,600,000 people. People who live out their lives in Alberta.

It is about the style and quality of people's lives here.

About their *health,* their illnesses.

Their *shelter,* their housing and the physical environment in which they live.

Their *education,* and the scope and quality of the opportunities provided by the educational systems.

Their *economic status:* their income, their employment and unemployment, their affluence and their poverty.

About *justice:* criminality and delinquency, rights and discriminations.

It is about the people's *participation,* or lack of it, in the shaping of their own destinies and that of their society.

It is about their cultural and recreational pursuits, how they spend their *leisure time.*

Their *mental* and *emotional health.*

And the role that *religion* plays in their lives.

In short, it is all about people, and for people. The people who live in Alberta.

All the World's a Stage

Some very significant events took place in Alberta in 1971. And some very significant trends began to surface.

Among the most startling of these was an abrupt change in the *political environment.* In the provincial election of August 30, the 36-year-old Social Credit Government went down to defeat at the hands of the Progressive Conservatives. Though something of a decline in Socred power had been predicted, Albertans (and probably both political parties) were, nevertheless, startled the day after the election to realize what they had done. But there was no doubting what they had done: They had struck a blow for urban power; they had struck a blow for secularization in politics; and they had struck a blow for closer affiliation between Alberta and the industrial centres of the nation...

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT—SOME INDICATORS

i. The dominant indicator of change in Alberta's political climate in 1971 was the overthrow of the 36 year old Social Credit Government and the assumption of power by the Progressive Conservatives.

ii. A number of trends, none of particularly recent origin, contributed to this sharp shift in political affiliations:
   a. An on-going process of urbanization has spawned a "power for the cities" movement in which city dwellers sought to achieve equality of political power with their rural cousins.
   b. The secularization of Alberta had led to a disenchantment with what were assumed to be the politico-religious ideologies of the former government.
   c. Industrial growth, and aspirations for continued growth, had led to a desire to re-affiliate with national power blocks.

iii. Some further, more subtle, political attitudes began to surface in 1971; these are likely to strengthen over the next decade:
   a. A belief that policy information should be "open" and that a good deal of the policy-making should take place in a public arena.
   b. An expectation that governments be "rational" and knowledge-based rather than "paternalistic" and intuition-based.
   c. An expectation that the various levels of government in their dealings with one another, stop politicking over the people's money, the people's business, and the people's welfare—and get on with the development of efficient government operations.

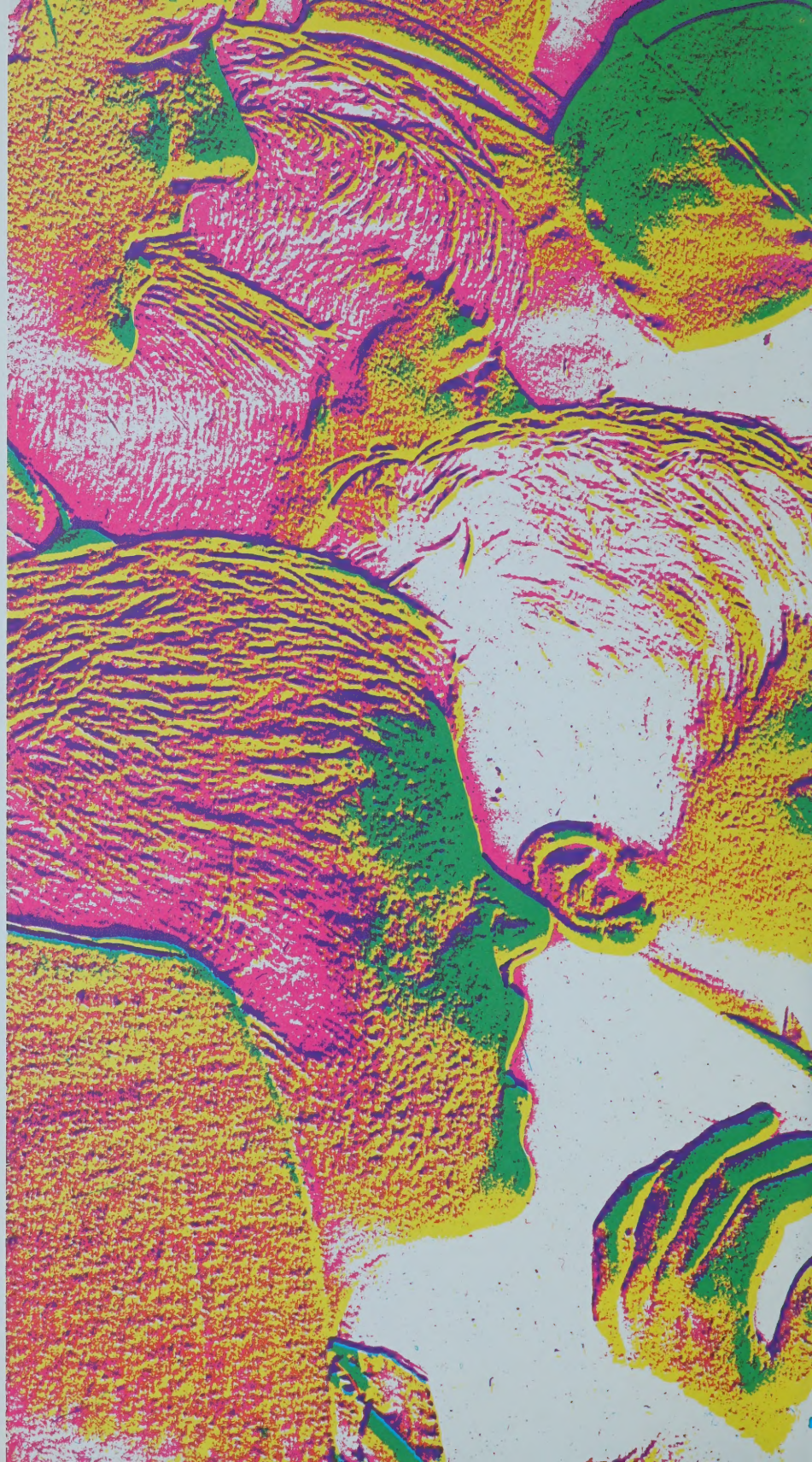
THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT—SOME INDICATORS

i. In terms of G.N.P. alone (which increased 9%) the Canadian economy continued to recover throughout 1971. However, though this up-swing in production did result in the creation of over 200,000 new jobs, unemployment remained intolerably high. Also, prices increased 3.5% and, by year's end, a new round of inflation was anticipated.

ii. In Alberta, the recovery in production and income was reflected in a number of ways:
   a. Increased crop yields and sales of farm products raised farmers' income by about 8% over the previous year—still short, however, of the peak reached in the mid-'60's.
   b. Crude oil production and sales ran about 10% higher than the previous year. With the renewed development of the tar sands and growing energy shortages in the U.S.A.,this activity was (and is) expected to remain a highly significant aspect of the Alberta economy—through present reserves appear to be low.
   c. Secondary manufacturing increased by 3 to 4%—a very significant trend, in light of growing labour surpluses.
   d. Dwelling starts from January to September more than doubled last year.
   e. Coal production was up 76% in the first 9 months.

iii. Though unemployment rates in Alberta stayed about 2 points behind the national average throughout the year, a full 6.5% of the labour force was unemployed in January; 3.1% in September; 4.2% by October; and 5% by year's end.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE,
AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN
MERELY PLAYERS. THEY HAVE
THEIR EXITS AND THEIR
ENTRANCES: AND ONE MAN IN
HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS,
(SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*)



The *economic environment* was also unstable throughout 1971, as the economic jitters of 1969 and '70 lingered on. While the federal government claimed that inflation had been beaten, that remained to be seen. And whatever had been done in the name of curbing inflation had been done at the cost of soaring unemployment. Yet Alberta's productivity came back in almost all areas, and by year's end optimism had been largely restored—for all except the province's 30,000 unemployed, who became the target of frenzied make-work and retraining programs of various kinds...

Albertans' concerns over the *physical environment* continued through '71, though there appeared to be little agreement as to just how good or bad the situation had become. Generally, it is assumed that pollution does not become a serious problem until the accumulations of various wastes exceed the self-renewing capabilities of the natural ecological system or the limits of man's tolerance. Whether or not pollution had reached these proportions by '71 was a matter of debate. It did become clear, however, that Alberta had not yet developed the techniques required to properly monitor this delicate balance between man's influence on his environment and its natural capabilities for self-renewal. Many observers (some of them somewhat alarmist in orientation) contended that unless such techniques were immediately perfected and applied, the environment would deteriorate to the point where man's tolerance would be tested to its limits. And they argued that such an eventuality should not be allowed to occur...

The ways in which Alberta's *social and cultural environment* has been shaped by its people (and has, in turn, tended to shape the lives of the people) are integral to this entire report; they will not be dealt with in this introductory section. Instead it may be appropriate to note at this juncture, that for the vast majority of Albertans the basic social unit is, as it always has been, the family—some kind of family. So it might be asked: What has happened to the family in Alberta? Does it continue to provide the dominant social context in which people play out their lives? The evidence suggests that it does.

So much for the stage and the backdrop. Now let us proceed to actors themselves, the people of Alberta.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT—SOME INDICATORS

i. The metropolitan areas of the province (Calgary and Edmonton) have not yet encountered serious air pollution problems. But the potential is there. Eternal vigilance and improved monitoring instruments (particularly for traffic produced carbon monoxides) are needed.

ii. The rivers upon which the two major metropolitan areas are located (the North Saskatchewan and the Bow) are both rather seriously polluted—as are the Oldman and the Red Deer. All cities with populations over 3,000 now have sewerage systems. But the indications are that these do not do an adequate job of treatment. The indications further are that a good deal of unauthorized "dumping" into the rivers continues to take place.

iii. Current methods of solid waste disposal are limited to incineration and dumping. The former tends to pollute the air; the latter tends to pollute the soil and disfigure the landscape. But no viable alternative is yet in sight.

iv. The province has no regulations governing noise pollution. Edmonton, however, experimented with a noise control by-law over the past year—only to find it "impossible to enforce."

THE BASIC SOCIAL UNIT: THE FAMILY IN ALBERTA—SOME INDICATORS

i. Albertans are marrying earlier than they used to—age 25 for males (3 years earlier than in 1940) and age 22 for females (2 years earlier than in 1940). Also they are marrying at a faster rate than the rest of Canada—8.7% compared to 8.1%.

ii. The rate of natural population increase (births relative to deaths) increased sharply from 1936 to 1954 when the rate was 24.2 per 1,000 population—then declined (along with the rest of Canada) to 14.1 in 1967, (compared to a 10.8% national average).

iii. 40% of Alberta families have 1 or 2 children; 32.5% have three or more; and 27.5% have none.

iv. The divorce rate in Alberta is now 125 per 100,000 people—twice as high as it was in 1960 and 50% higher than the over-all Canadian rate.

v. The rate of illegitimate births in Alberta is now 12% of live births—double what it was in 1900 and 50% higher than the over-all Canadian rate.

The *economic environment* was also unstable throughout 1971, as the economic jitters of 1969 and '70 lingered on. While the federal government claimed that inflation had been beaten, that remained to be seen. And whatever had been done in the name of curbing inflation had been done at the cost of soaring unemployment. Yet Alberta's productivity came back in almost all areas, and by year's end optimism had been largely restored—for all except the province's 30,000 unemployed, who became the target of frenzied make-work and retraining programs of various kinds...

Albertans' concerns over the *physical environment* continued through '71, though there appeared to be little agreement as to just how good or bad the situation had become. Generally, it is assumed that pollution does not become a serious problem until the accumulations of various wastes exceed the self-renewing capabilities of the natural ecological system or the limits of man's tolerance.

health

AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS. THEY HAVE THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES; AND ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS.

By almost every known standard, Albertans are becoming a healthier and healthier people. Life expectancy in Alberta has increased a full 20 years over the past generation, and is now well above the national average. Infant mortality and death rates have decreased well below the national average.

However, one must not be complacent over these positive indicators. For all Albertans do not share equally in this general state of good health. On the contrary, tuberculosis and venereal disease, traditionally plagues of the out-posts and the down-trodden, currently have rates in Alberta which are among the highest in Canada. The Indian and Metis appear to be the favorite victims of these two diseases.

By most standards, the quality of health care services enjoyed by Albertans is also high. But as indicated, this is not universally so. Though the overall commitment of resources to the field of health care is high, the geographic distribution of these is such as to leave some of our citizens genuinely deprived.

Comment: **During the current fiscal year, ending March 31, 1972, the Government of Alberta will invest over $246 million (approximately 21% of the provincial budget) on the provision of health care services and related activities. This investment, along with the investments of previous years, will undoubtedly pay off in yet higher levels of physical well-being among most Albertans.**

But one must ask: What about those citizens whose physical health and well-being will not be improved? What about the citizens of the so-called outlying areas where life expectancy will not be extended? What about those regions in which the infant mortality rate will not decrease? What about those people who will continue to suffer high incidences of V.D., of T.B., and other diseases—without access to adequate medical services?

THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF ALBERTANS—SOME INDICATORS

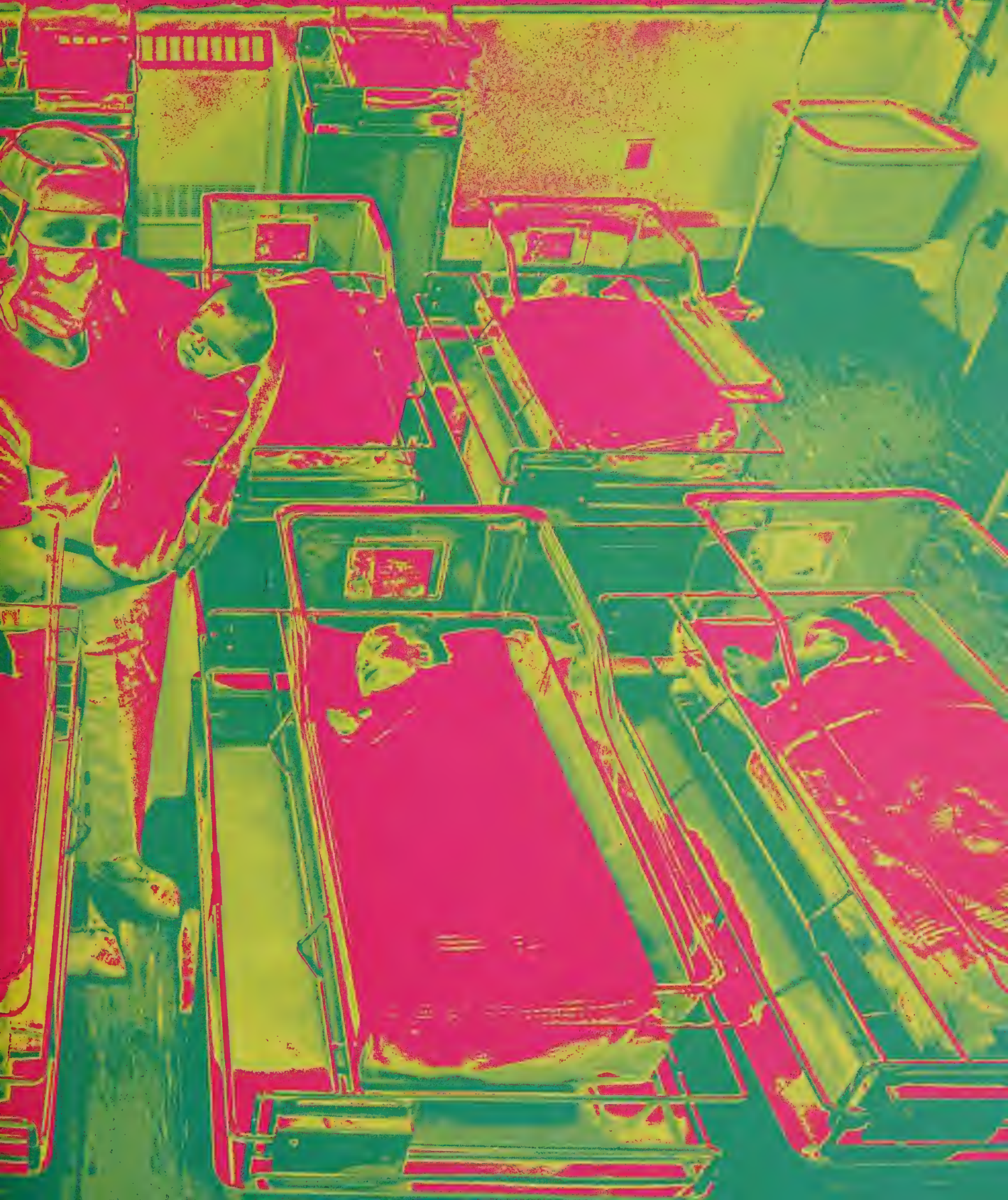
i. The life span of the typical Albertan has increased considerably over the past few decades. In 1936, the average age at death was 52.2 years for males (compared to a national average of 58.9) and 48.1 for females (compared to a national average of 59.8); today the average age at death is 69.3 for males (compared to a national average of 68.2) and 72.5 for females (compared to a national average of 73.6).
ii. Alberta's rate of infant mortality is 19.0 per 1,000 live births—compared to a rate of 24.2 a decade ago and 38.6 two decades ago. The current rate is lower than that of Canada as a whole (19.3), but not as low as that of some other countries—England (18.0), Denmark (15.8), Norway (13.7) or the Netherlands (13.1).
iii. Alberta's death rate, 6.5 per 1,000 population, is lower than that of the whole of Canada (7.4) or the United States (9.6).
iv. The highest causes of death in Alberta, in order, are: diseases of the circulatory system, cancer, and accidents. These account for ¾ of all deaths.
v. The traffic accident death rate per unit population has increased by about 3% per year over the past 15 years—from 19.30 per 100,000 population in 1954 to 27.35 per 100,000 in 1969.
vi. The Indian and Metis population of Alberta, less than 5% of the total, accounts for a highly disproportionate number of the venereal disease and tuberculosis cases. The T.B. rate for Indians, for example, is 342.8 compared to 24.6 for the whole population. Alberta's rate of hospitalization for T.B. is the highest in Canada; its rate of gonorrhea is equalled only by the other two prairie provinces and surpassed by the Yukon and N.W.T.
vii. Slightly over 1% (17,128) of the population is handicapped suffering a range of defects such as mental retardation, speech defects, epilepsy, the effects of poliomyelitis, etc.

PHYSICAL HEALTH SERVICES IN ALBERTA—SOME INDICATORS

i. Alberta has Canada's highest per capita bed capacity (over 20,000 in 1969) and its highest rate of hospitalization (330,000 admissions and over 4,000,000 patient days in 1969).
ii. Approximately 11 of every 1,000 Albertans are employed in the health industry, compared to about 10 per 1,000 in other parts of Canada.
iii. Alberta has about 2,000 physicians, one for every 800 people—one of the highest proportions in Canada but one which is considered only optimal by the Canadian Medical Association.
iv. Medical specialists are unevenly distributed geographically. In some regions (Athabasca and Fort McMurray, for example) there is only one doctor for every 1,600 people—less than half the optimum number or the rate prevailing elsewhere in the Province.
v. Alberta has about 9,500 registered nurses (1970)—one for every 166 people (compared to one for every 157 at the national level).
vi. Alberta has 1 dentist for every 2,850 people; the optimal standard is considered to be 1:1500.
vii. In 1969, Albertans paid the equivalent of $198.99 per capita for health services —second only to Ontarians who paid $204.50 per capita.
viii. In July, 1969, the Alberta Health Care Plan was created; 1,637,677 were insured under the plan in 1970.

health

AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS. THEY HAVE THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES; AND ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS.



housing

The ideal in housing among Albertans (as among Canadians in general) is still considered to be ownership of a single-family, detached dwelling, with all the amenities of clean and effective heating, running water and flush toilets, and at least a modest plot of ground for gardening and do-it-yourself landscaping.

This ideal, however, is becoming increasingly difficult for many Albertans to attain. In fact, it is estimated that over one-third of our people are having housing problems. And were it not for the fact that all three levels of government have moved vigorously into the housing field, the situation would be far worse. Indeed, adequate housing might be the exclusive privilege of an economic elite.

Comment: **Despite public participation and subsidization of various kinds, the development and control of the shelter market remains largely within the private sector. And for reasons which are not entirely clear, the enterprise, as it is currently operated, appears to be unequal to the task of providing adequate housing at reasonable cost for most citizens.**

This situation warrants careful scrutiny. Certain questions must be pressed. Is the industry dominated by a few major firms who can force prices beyond the reach of most people? Is the building materials industry similarly controlled? To what extent are construction costs forced up and innovative construction methods prohibited by government regulations? In short, what is it that prevents the industry from meeting the demand?

These and other questions must be answered, and answered soon. Shelter is a basic human need. If private industry cannot meet that need, we simply must know why not —and take whatever steps are needed, either to bolster the industry or find an alternative.

THE HOUSING OF ALBERTANS—SOME INDICATORS

i. Alberta has 434,000 households—⅔ of which are owned by the householders and ⅓ of which are rented. 74% of these are single detached; 3% are single attached; and 23% are apartments or flats.

ii. Of Alberta's 434,000 households, 11,000 (or 2.54%) share bathrooms with other households—compared to 1.08% for Ontario, 0.97% for B.C., and .95% for Canada as a whole.

iii. Of the 434,000 dwellings 69% have steam, hot water, or hot air furnaces;84% use piped gas for fuel; 92.5% have hot and cold piped water; 91% have flush toilets. In short, about 9 out of every 10 householders in Alberta enjoy the basic amenities.

iv. Home purchase continues to be a difficult undertaking for most Albertans—and an impossible one for many. For example, a modest, new bungalow in urban Alberta now costs approximately $22,000—which, according to CMHC purchase regulations, is beyond the reach of well over half of all Albertans. An individual earning $5,000 per year can qualify with the Alberta Housing Corporation for a mortgage of about $16,000. This will purchase an older house, in an unattractive district, probably lacking a basement, and probably not in a particularly good state of repair.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HOUSING SERVICES

i. The supply of housing has been primarily a responsibility of private enterprise; however, private investment has not been equally available in all locations or to all persons. It has tended to be concentrated in the larger urban centers, in housing for upper income groups and in large scale apartment projects. Housing competes for investment capital with alternative forms of private investment, which frequently are more attractive.

ii. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) a federal crown corporation, provides direct lending and various financial services where private monies tend not to be available. CMC is empowered to ensure mortgage loans made by approved lenders to minimize the risk to mortgagors. CMHC also provides a wide array of special programs which include public, low rental and student housing, home improvement loans, as well as urban renewal, land assembly and services funding.

iii. The Alberta Housing Corporation (AHC) a provincial crown corporation created in 1965, has concentrated its activities in special sectors of the housing market to complement the activities of private enterprise and AHC has recently added a direct lending program for new and used housing to provide funds not available from either CMHC or other approved lenders.

iv. Of the many programs—low rental, public housing and innovative programs—only public housing could be said to cater to the needs of those with incomes of less than $4,000 per annum.

v. Both Calgary and Edmonton have housing agencies which, although they provide somewhat different services, are primarily concerned with the housing plight of low income urban residents.

housing

education

Alberta has developed one of the most comprehensive educational systems in Canada. And education is one of the province's largest enterprises. It is estimated that one in every three of the entire population is directly involved—as a student, teacher, administrator, or a service person.

The rates of participation of Albertans in educational pursuits are shaped largely by the laws of compulsion and by patterns of public support: approximately 5% at the early childhood level; virtually 100% at the elementary and junior secondary levels; about 93% at the senior secondary level; close to 50% at the post-secondary level; and about 10% at the adult level.

Clearly, the system's weakest point is at the early childhood level. Indeed, the evidence suggests that in this area, Alberta's record is one of the poorest in Canada. There are no publicly-supported kindergartens (except for two modest pilot projects, one each in Calgary and Edmonton). And until the age of admission to elementary school was lowered to 5½ years, there were virtually no formal educational opportunities available to youngsters under six years of age.

Comment: **The Alberta government's investments in the people's education will total well over $410 million in the fiscal year 1971-72. This amounts to almost 35% of the provincial budget and represents an increase of 8% over the previous year.**

Most of the increases in costs over the past few years have been at the post-secondary level where demand has risen sharply and where efforts have been made to diversify opportunities in attempts to accommodate larger and larger numbers.

Interestingly, in both the 1970-71 and the 1971-72 academic terms, enrolments in universities were lower than predicted. It is difficult to say what the exact reasons were for these declines. But there does appear to be some disenchantment with university among the young. Perhaps it has something to do with what they refer to as the university's irrelevance to contemporary society. Or perhaps it is more closely related to the fact that more and more university graduates are discovering that their skills are not saleable in the job market. Whatever the case, it would appear that the trend toward increased enrolments at all levels, which has continued over the past several decades, has now turned the corner. A period of decline may be in the offing.

One question of public educational policy must be asked: Why does Alberta invest so minimally in the provision of early childhood educational opportunities? Evidence suggests that something between 50% and 75% of all human abilities are developed in the early childhood years. These are the critical years. The years in which the individual either gets a good start or fails to get started.

But in Alberta we do virtually nothing to ensure that healthy patterns of human development are established during these critical years. Why? Why do we insist upon placing our investments in less promising areas?

LITERACY AND THE EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS OF ALBERTANS
—SOME INDICATORS

i. At the "early childhood level" (3-5 years of age) where educational services are optional and non-free, the participation rate of Albertans is one of the lowest in Canada. Only 2.2% of Alberta's 5 year olds attend kindergarten—compared to a 60% national average. Only 5% of the 3-5 year age group is involved in preschool or kindergarten activities—though the lowering of the Grade 1 admission age to 5½ has resulted in the inclusion of an additional 11,000 five and a half year olds in the regular school program (another 9% of the 3-5 age group).

ii. At the elementary and junior high school level (ages 6-16) where education is both compulsory and free, the participation rate is virtually 100%.

iii. At the high school level (ages 16 to graduation) where education is free but non-compulsory, participation rates drop slightly to just over 93%. During the 1969 calendar year, 5,882 students in this category dropped out to engage in non-educational pursuits, including work and marriage.

iv. At the post-secondary level, (ages 18-24) where educational pursuit is voluntary, but subsidized, the participation rate is approximately 50%—including universities, which serve about 15% of the age group; colleges, which serve another 5%; technical institutes, agricultural colleges and other institutions which serve another 30%.

v. At the adult or continuing education level, where education is purely voluntary and non-free, only 74,000 or slightly less than 10% of the population (25 years and older) participated.

vi. It is estimated that less than 20% of Alberta's population of 18 years of age and older has completed high school—compared, for example, to over 35% in the United States.

THE SCOPE AND QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
—SOME INDICATORS

i. In 1970-71 expenditures by the Provincial Department of Education totalled 379.5 million dollars—or 33.6% of all provincial expenditures.

ii. Per pupil expenditure in 1969-70 in the public and separate school systems was $726 compared to $652 in the previous year.

iii. In 1970, over 23,000 students received over $20 million in financial assistance (a 19% increase in numbers over the previous year and a $5 million or 30% increase in amount).

iv. Alberta's annual expenditures on post-secondary education increased from $29 million to almost $152 million between 1960 and 1970. The province's expenditures in this area are now the third highest in Canada—behind only Ontario and Quebec. Alberta's population is roughly 21% of Ontario; its expenditures on post-secondary education are roughly 25%. Alberta's population is roughly 26% of Quebec's; its expenditures on post-secondary education are roughly 30%.

v. In 1970, Alberta's cost per full time university student was $3,528 (second only to Ontario at $4,171). In the same year, Alberta's costs per full time non-University, post-secondary student were $1,621 compared to a Canadian average of $1,487.

education

Alberta has developed one of the most comprehensive educational systems in Canada. And education is one of the province's largest enterprises. It is estimated that one in every three of the entire population is directly involved—as a student, teacher, administrator, or a service person.

The rates of participation of Albertans in educational pursuits are shaped largely by the laws of compulsion and by patterns of public support: approximately 5% at the early childhood level; virtually 100% at the elementary and junior secondary levels; about 93% at the senior secondary level; close to 50% at the post-secondary level; and about 10% at the adult level.

Clearly, the system's weakest point is at the early childhood level. Indeed, the evidence suggests that in this area, Alberta's record is one of the poorest in Canada. There are no publicly-supported kindergartens (except for two modest pilot projects, one each in Calgary and Edmonton). And until the age of admission to elementary school was lowered to 5½ years, there were virtually no formal educational opportunities available to youngsters under six years of age.

employment and income

Alberta's employment picture in 1971, though considerably better than in other parts of Canada, was one of the worst experienced in recent years. In January, over 40,000 Albertans or 6.5% of the labour force were out of work. During the summer, the rate decreased to 3.1%, but in the autumn and early winter, increased again to nearly 5%. And these figures must be considered in light of the fact that they do not include the "hard core" unemployed, who have been defined out of the labour market.

Apart from the hardships of unemployment—which touched many households—there were other problems of underemployment and inadequate take-home pay. It is estimated that about 30% of Alberta's wage earners earn less than $4,800 per annum, very close to the poverty line, according to the Economic Council of Canada.

By year's end, the aim of all levels of government was to improve the economic conditions of people through the creation of new jobs. Industrial incentive programs, retraining programs, and make-work programs of various kinds were added to the employment and income services normally provided by the governments.

Comment: **It would appear that governments are still unable (or unwilling) to manipulate the economy in the bold and imaginative ways required to sustain growth, to curb inflation, and to maintain healthy labour markets.**

Why the record is so bad in this critical government function is difficult to say. But at least part of the failure can be attributed to the limited time horizons that governments adopt. Typically, they tend to be reactive rather than anticipatory, to treat the condition after it is upon them rather than while it is in the making.

The employment and income aspects of Canada's economy are undoubtedly in for hard times. Ours is the most rapidly growing labour force in the western world. But the development of labour-intensive industry is not keeping pace with this growth in the labour force. Hence, we find ourselves in the anomalous position of having one segment of the economy (the exploitation of natural resources) fairly robust, while another segment (secondary industry and the use of human resources) remains sluggish and, in fact, a drain on the overall situation.

The need has become apparent for creative, imaginative planning. The kind of imaginative planning that is based on solid research and long-term solutions, not crude guesstimates and reactions to crises.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OF ALBERTANS—SOME INDICATORS

i. Throughout 1971, participation in the labour force increased from 628,000 (57.1%) in January to 675,000 (59.9%) in October. Female participation was up to 40.3% in 1970 from 36.7% in 1966; male participation was down to 79.8% in 1970 from 80.2% in 1966.

ii. Though unemployment in Alberta stayed about 2 points behind the national average throughout the year, a full 40,800 Albertans (6.5% of the labour force) were unemployed in January. The rate declined to 3.1% by September, but rose to 4.2% (28,056) in November.

iii. Income data for the past three years are not yet available. In 1967, however Alberta had the third highest family income rate in Canada—behind only Ontario and B.C. Alberta's average family income was $7,289 compared to a national average of $7,062.

iv. Well over 50% of the families had incomes lower than this, however. Indeed, approximately 30% of them had incomes below $4,800 (estimated by the Economic Council of Canada to be the poverty line for families of five or more persons) and about 25% of them had incomes below $3,600 (estimated by E.C.C. to be the poverty line for families of three persons).

v. Further evidence of the extremes in income distribution in Alberta is to be found in the 1966 income tax returns, in which 68% of the population declared incomes of $5,000 or less, 27% declared incomes between $5,000 and $10,000, and 5% declared incomes over $10,000. By 1969, these rates had changed to 49%, 39.5% and 11.5% respectively—a rather significant improvement.

vi. On a national level, it has been estimated that well over 50% of the country's "poor" are either over 65 years of age or under 16—the former constituting 16% of the poor, the latter 40%.

THE QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SERVICES —SOME INDICATORS

i. Traditionally, manpower service has been regarded primarily as the responsibility of the Federal Government—though it discharges this responsibility in cooperation with the provinces. Manpower services take three major forms: training programs, mobility programs, and unemployment insurance.
The effectiveness of training programs is difficult to assess, inasmuch as the entire operation is obscured by federa-provincial jurisdictional questions, by inter-departmental divisions of responsibility at both levels of government, and by overlaps of public with private endeavor. The mobility program (which moves the man to the job) is judged to be an effective contribution to economic development. The Economic Council of Canada has estimated a benefit/cost ratio of 2.5 for this program.

ii. The provincial Department of Social Development assumes major responsibility for the care of persons who, for one reason or another, do not have sufficient income to purchase a decent existence. These services take many forms: child welfare programs, preventive programs, pensions for the disabled, provision of homes for the aged, etc. This Department's budget for 1971-72 is $84,830,704 or approximately 7.2% of the provincial budget.

employment and income

Alberta's employment picture in 1971, though considerably better than in other parts of Canada, was one of the worst experienced in recent years. In January, over 40,000 Albertans or 6.5% of the labour force were out of work. During the summer, the rate decreased to 3.1%, but in the autumn and early winter, increased again to nearly 5%. And these figures must be considered in light of the fact that they do not include the "hard core" unemployed, who have been defined out of the labour market.

justice

In 1971, a Minister of the Crown brought before the Alberta Legislature the personal file of a citizen who happened to be a welfare recipient. The Minister justified his action (or at least attempted to do so) on the grounds that the file contained information relevant to a dispute that had arisen between the government and the residents of the community in which the individual lived.

This episode created all kinds of shock waves among Albertans. Suddenly all their rights to privacy seemed in jeopardy. And they asked: How far can a government or any other agency go in disclosing personal information about an individual?

The episode was reminiscent of another, somewhat related one, which had occurred not long before. The Edmonton Social Planning Council, as a service to youth, published, in 1969, a modest brochure in which it set forth certain basic information with respect to the individual's rights before the law and the treatment one should expect from law enforcement officers. Interestingly, the document was roundly criticized both by the Alberta Attorney General and by the Edmonton Police Department as being somewhat subversive and encouraging to young people to question the authority of the police.

And again, people wondered: Do our officials wish to keep us ignorant of the law? Ignorant of our personal and legal rights? If so—why?

Crime rates are increasing. And jail sentences continue to be our main approach to dealing with offenders. Yet the records show that of all the cases of imprisonment reported in the year ending March 31, 1970, fully two-thirds were repeaters. And so one has cause to wonder: Are our jails really institutions of correction and readjustment? Or are they noxious breeding grounds for further criminal activity?

Comment: **The good and just society in Alberta (as in the rest of Canada) appears as yet to be little more than an ideal. Albertans are not yet adequately protected against invasions of their privacy. They are not yet guaranteed equality before the law. (The high incidence of arrest and incarceration among minority groups attests to this fact). And they are not yet fully protected against other forms of discrimination.**

It would further appear that Alberta's penal system is far from effective in the readjustment of the criminally inclined. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that our jails are perpetuating a kind of "criminal sub-culture." A sub-culture created, in part, by the so-called criminal inclinations of its members, and bolstered by the treatment these people receive from the law enforcement and correctional system of society.

Has our knowledge of human behaviour not yet advanced to the point where we can do other than reinforce the development of such malignant sub-cultures?

CRIMINALITY AND JUSTICE IN ALBERTA—SOME INDICATORS

i. Crime in Alberta (along with the rest of Canada) increased by more than 70% between 1967 and 1971.

ii. In Calgary, the reported incidence of major crime was, in 1970, up 25.6% over the previous year; in Edmonton, the increase was 38% (including robbery up 56%, rape up 100%, and drug cases up 100%).

iii. Between 1969 and 1970, the juvenile crime rate for Alberta increased by 19%—while the juvenile population increased by only 2%.

iv. Convictions under the Narcotics Control Act increased 30% between 1969 and 1970; convictions under the Food and Drug Act increased from zero to 97 during the same period.

v. Of the 10,386 persons committed to Alberta jails in the year ending March 31, 1970, only 3,348 (or approximately ⅓) were first offenders.

vi. Though Indians and Metis comprise less than 5% of the Alberta population, they constituted close to 50% of the imprisonments.

vii. The most common punishment for indictable offence is jail sentence (48.5%)—followed by fines and suspended sentences.

viii. Probation is increasing among young offenders but decreasing among older offenders—an increase of 28% in the former case (in 1968) but a decrease of 2.5% in the latter.

SERVICES RELATED TO CRIMINALITY AND JUSTICE
—SOME INDICATORS

i. Though crime rates have increased and are increasing, and though the general population is increasing, the number of police has remained comparatively constant. In fact, between 1967 and 1969 the actual number of police in Alberta decreased by 55.

ii. The rate of recidivism in criminality (two thirds of the 1970 admissions to Alberta jails were repeaters) suggests that little in the way of rehabilitation is achieved in jails. Recidivism is increasing in all categories.

iii. Rapid turnover (80% for less than 2 months, 60% less than 30 days) is further indication that jail sentences are viewed more as punishments, rather than as period of rehabilitation and re-adjustment.

iv. The fact that 96% of all probationers completed or continued their probationary periods successfully, in 1969-70, suggests that this form of treatment may be among the most successful of all.

justice

In 1971, a Minister of the Crown brought before the Alberta Legislature the personal file of a citizen who happened to be a welfare recipient. The Minister justified his action (or at least attempted to do so) on the grounds that the file contained information relevant to a dispute that had arisen between the government and the residents of the community in which the individual lived.

This episode created all kinds of shock waves among Albertans. Suddenly all their rights to privacy seemed in jeopardy. And they asked: How far can a government or any other agency go in disclosing personal information about an individual?

The episode was reminiscent of another, somewhat related one, which had occurred not long before. The Edmonton Social Planning Council, as a service to youth, published, in 1969, a modest brochure in which it set forth certain basic information with respect to the individual's rights before the law and the

participation

Indications are that Albertans are not particularly active participants in public affairs, except when they become fed up with the status quo and decide they want a change.

It must be noted, however, that inducements to active political behaviour among Albertans are not particularly strong.

Participation at the polls is not much encouraged by a situation which makes one man's vote worth virtually twice as much as another's, as is the case in Alberta where urban electoral districts average double the population of non-urban districts.

Another circumstance mitigates against public participation in policy-making; it is best described with an example.

In early 1971, one of the Alberta universities organized a seminar on the environment. A number of distinguished scientists and senior government officials were invited to participate in the seminar. Before the seminar began, however, a Minister of the Crown issued a directive to all public servants in his Department, forbidding them to disclose any environmental information to which they might have access by virtue of their jobs. Through this action, the government withheld from public debate information which otherwise might have added significantly to the relevancy of the dialogue. Not much of an encouragement for public participation.

It is interesting to note—in light of this Canadian propensity for closed-door policy-making—that Alberta voters do rise up in large numbers when they believe the situation warrants it. Voter turnout for provincial elections has always been low compared to turn-outs for federal elections, but for two exceptions: in the 1930's, when Albertans were determined to establish the Socreds in power, and again in 1971 when they decided to turn the Socreds out of power.

Comment: **Although Albertans have not distinguished themselves as a politically active people or as people particularly interested in public policy-making, there are indications of impending change. Indeed, there is a growing demand (articulated more by students than by adults) that public issues be debated in open forums and that public policy be established only after the people have been heard.**

In time, this growing expectation will force policy debates out from behind the closed doors of government and will subject the process of policy-making to ever closer public scrutiny. As this happens, it will become imperative that the people be fully informed, that they have available the knowledge required to be discerning, to distinguish between good and bad policy.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING—SOME INDICATORS

i. In the 1968 federal election approximately 50% of the Alberta population (774,565) were entitled to vote. Of these, approximately 75% (576,461) actually voted. Alberta's voter participation rate at this time was tenth among the provinces and territories (as it had been in 1965) with only Quebec and Newfoundland participating at lower rates.

ii. In the 1963 provincial election, 56% of the registered voters went to the polls. In 1967, this rate had increased to 63.1%; in 1971 (when the government was changed) the rate increased to 71.9%.

iii. Voter participation rates appear to be closely attuned to impending change. In the early 30's (during the ascendency of the Socreds) provincial participation rates exceeded the federal; during the 40's, 50's and 60's provincial rates declined in comparison to federal rates; but in the 70's provincial rates climbed again.

iv. Voter participation in municipal elections in Alberta is considerably lower than in provincial or federal elections. Some sample averages over the past ten years have been: Edmonton, 36%; Calgary, 36%; Lethbridge, 48%; Grande Prairie, 22%.

INDUCEMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC POLICY—SOME INDICATORS

i. The largest electoral district in Alberta is nearly six times larger than the smallest.

ii. The average size of urban electoral districts in Alberta is 19,240; the average size of non-urban districts in 8,030. Hence, the vote of a citizen in an urban district is virtually worth less than a half of the vote of a non-urban citizen.

participation

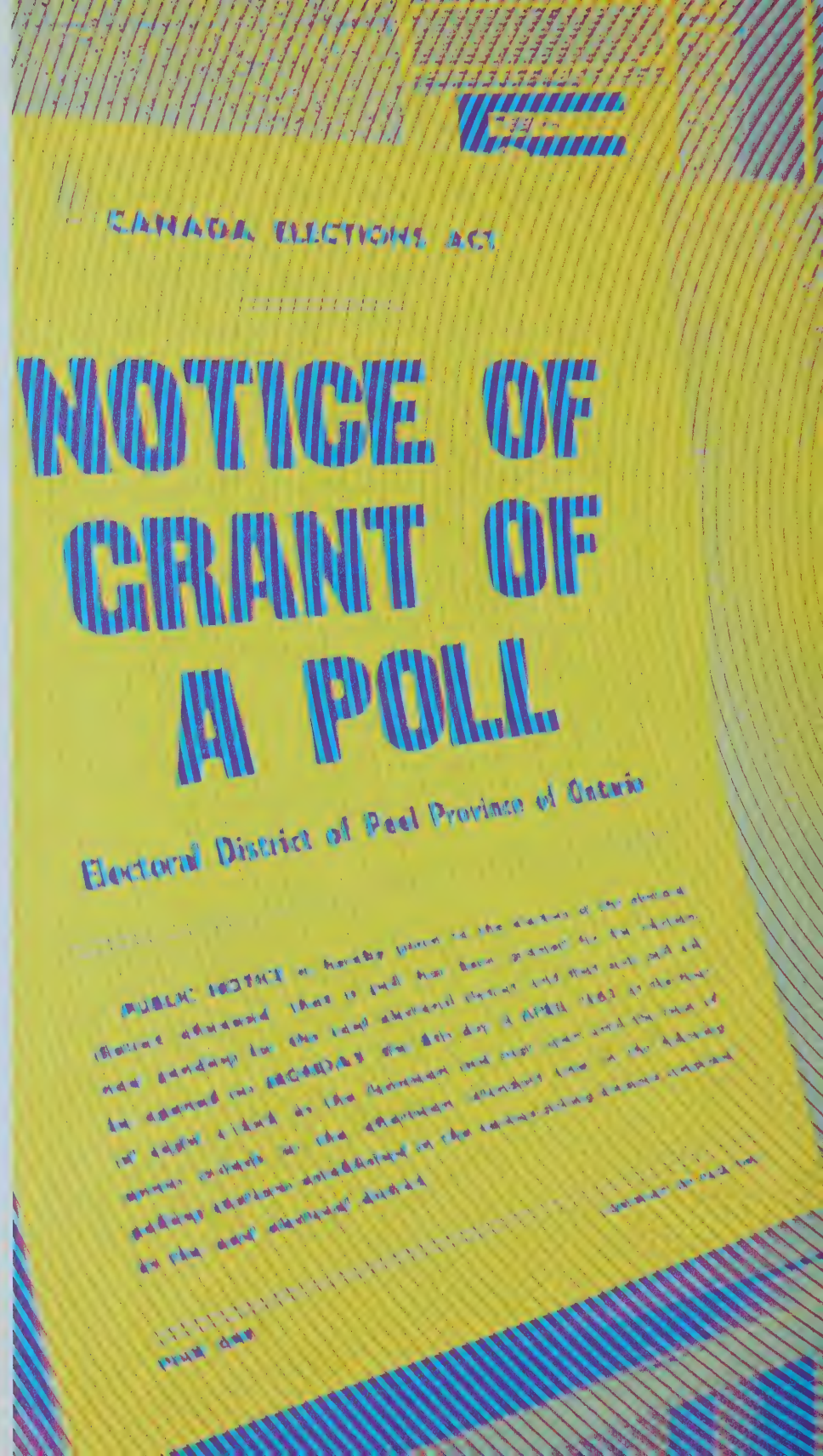
Indications are that Albertans are not particularly active participants in public affairs, except when they become fed up with the status quo and decide they want a change.

It must be noted, however, that inducements to active political behaviour among Albertans are not particularly strong.

Participation at the polls is not much encouraged by a situation which makes one man's vote worth virtually twice as much as another's, as is the case in Alberta where urban electoral districts average double the population of non-urban districts.

Another circumstance mitigates against public participation in policy-making; it is best described with an example.

In early 1971, one of the Alberta universities organized a seminar on the environment. A number of distinguished scientists and senior government officials were invited to participate in the seminar. Before the seminar began, however, a Minister of



cultural and recreational pursuits

One of the most difficult things to determine about a people is how they spend their spare time.

As indicated elsewhere, Albertans are basically "family people," basically "home people." Hence, they tend to guard jealously (with high fences, shrubs, and hedges) the privacy of their homes and the privacy of their non-working, family lives. Within this context of family and privacy, however, they do plan and engage in a host of recreational and cultural activities, with varying degrees of satisfaction and self-fulfillment.

Public recreational and cultural facilities are comparatively abundant in Alberta. Though patterns of public use of these facilities are admittedly somewhat inconclusive, indications are that favoured recreational opportunities remain those of the individual's own making.

Comment: **All sorts of evaluative comments could be made about the recreational habits of Albertans. But these would be largely conjecture, for after all, what one does with his leisure time is and must be purely a matter of personal choice. It is highly likely, however, that in many, many cases, choices are based more upon economics than upon desire. For some of the most popular recreational pursuits (skiing, theatre-going, and so on) are highly expensive, and well beyond the reach of many citizens.**

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL PURSUITS OF ALBERTANS
—SOME INDICATORS

i. Television is by far the most popular spare-time activity of Albertans. Every evening about 800,000 people (approximately ½ the population) each spend two hours before the T.V.

ii. Pub-going and the consumption of alcohol probably ranks second—for Alberta has 690 licensed public drinking spots where, along with the intake in private homes, 24 million gallons of beer, 1.9 million gallons of wine, 74 thousand gallons of liqueurs, and 37 gallons of cider are consumed. In 55 licensed lounges patrons can combine live entertainment with their food and drink—including the latest in topless fare.

iii. Movie-going would appear to rank third—for there were, in 1970, 222 movie houses in Alberta—compared to 205 in 1969 and 190 in 1967.

iv. Yearly attendance at the Provincial Archives during 1970 was just over 300,000 —approximately the equivalent of Calgary T.V. viewing audiences on a single night.

v. The Northern and Southern Jubilee Auditoriums over a three year period drew total audiences ranging from 350,000 to 400,000 per year. The best audiences were for films, symphony concerts and ballets were the most poorly attended—typically drawing about ⅓ capacity.

vi. All agencies for the performing arts are located in urban centres—with ⅔ of them in Edmonton. The Citadel, for example, drew audiences to 94% of its capacity in 1969-70. Despite its high percentage of seats sold, however, its continued existence is dependent upon outside financial support.

vii. Albertan's traditional interest in sports appears to be continuing. Attendance at football games is up—as is participation in amateur sports, including hockey, lacross and soccer. Wholesale trade in sporting goods almost doubled between 1966 and 1969 when sales amounted to almost $10,000,000.

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ALBERTA
—SOME INDICATORS

i. Alberta is served by 27 radio stations and 9 television stations. Of the province's 410,000 households, nearly 400,000 have radios and 370,000 also have T.V. sets.

ii. Alberta has one regional, 70 municipal and 88 community libraries which serve about 75% of the population. The remaining 25% has no access.

iii. Alberta is served by seven daily newspapers and 90 weeklies. The circulation of dailies is 374,402; the circulation of weeklies is 537,265—out of 410,000 households.

iv. There are five National Parks in Alberta—about 70% of the total area of all Canadian National Parks. In addition, 60% of the Province's total land area is publicly owned (156,000 acres).

v. Alberta's cities, towns, and villages have reserve lands averaging 29 acres per 1,000 persons—compared to a commonly accepted standard of 10 acres per 1,000 persons.

vi. The Provincial Government's contributions to the Arts, museums, and achives increased to $2,206,100 in 1969-70 from $1,577,810 in 1965-66 and from $595,870 in 1960-61.

cultural and recreational pursuits

25″
Eagles

mental health

Because mental illness carries a kind of 19th century stigma, and because adequate information is so difficult to obtain, little can be said about the half million or more Albertans who are estimated to suffer from some form of mental or emotional disorder. The statistics that show up in hospital records are, in fact, thought to be little more than the slim tip of a very large iceberg.

Inferences might be read into the fact that Albertans consume 7–8% more alcohol than other Canadians, and 5% of the population over the age of 15 are actually considered hazardous drinkers. In addition, use of marijuana and hashish is dramatically on the rise, while "harder" drugs are also making advances. However, there is presently no sure way of determining to what extent these trends may be indicative of a general increase in alienation and subsequent problems of mental illness.

Though most experts would admit that our knowledge about this particular form of human misery is woefully inadequate, all would contend that we have neither the research capability to enlighten the situation nor the resources required to engage in the kinds of preventive and rehabilitative programs that we know are required.

Comment: **It seems unfortunate, and more than a little short-sighted, that just now, when the problem of mental illness is alleged to be assuming crisis proportions, and when developments in society promise to contribute further to the malady, resources for research, for preventive services in schools and other institutions, and facilities for treatment appear to be in ever-shorter supply.**

Admittedly, no one seems sure just how serious the problem now is or how serious it has the potential to become. Some analysts (of the alarmist variety) predict a general deterioration in the mental and emotional condition of the entire society. Others (of the more complacent variety) contend that the situation is probably no worse than it ever was—but is merely made to look worse by improved reporting and record-keeping techniques.

The answer probably lies somewhere between. But the important thing is: We are not sure!

THE MENTAL HEALTH OF ALBERTANS—SOME INDICATORS

i. In 1970, it was estimated that approximately 540,000 Albertans (one of every three) were suffering or had suffered from some form of mental or emotional disorder (C.M.H.A.).

ii. At the end of 1969, approximately 6,000 Albertans were in mental institutions. Throughout the year there were an additional 3,612 first admissions—a rate of 231 per 100,000 population (the 5th highest rate in Canada).

iii. Though admission patterns indicate that mental illness may strike anywhere and everywhere, the elderly, men in their twenties and women in their thirties appear to be particularly susceptible.

iv. For males, the highest cause of first admission to mental institutions is alcoholism. Albertans consume 7-8% more alcohol than other Canadians. It is estimated that there are 40,000 to 50,000 hazardous drinkers in Alberta—about 5% of the population 15 years or older.

v. It is estimated that of the 4,000 drug addicts in Canada, only 4.5% are Albertans. Use of marijuana and hashish, however, which is not reflected in the addicted population figures, is very much on the increase. In 1962, only 24 marijuana cases came before the Narcotic Control Division; in 1969, the number was 5,157. Ten percent of all convictions in Canada involving marijuana and hashish occured in Alberta.

vi. In 1969, 196 persons committed suicide. This suggests that close to 1,000 attempted to do so—for it is estimated that for every successful suicide there are five aborted ones.

THE QUALITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN ALBERTA —SOME INDICATORS

i. There are eight mental hospitals in Alberta (1969). All provide occupational therapy; most provide diagnostic x-ray services, electro encephalography, social services, out-patient services, and after-care services; some provide clinical pathology services, home visitation services and trial weekends. None provides day-center therapy or night-center therapy.

ii. There are fifteen private institutions for emotionally-disturbed and mentally retarded children—in addition to five small public facilities and seven guidance clinics operated by the Province (1967). There are 29 auxiliary hospitals, 52 nursing homes, and 73 homes for the aged. (1970).

iii. The number of psychiatrists in Alberta more than doubled between 1960 and 1969 from 25 to 54—at which time it was estimated that an additional 50 were required.

iv. It was estimated (1969) that Alberta needed an additional 116 psychologists and 390 school counsellors to provide adequate preventive and early diagnostic services.

mental health

Because mental illness carries a kind of 19th century stigma, and because adequate information is so difficult to obtain, little can be said about the half million or more Albertans who are estimated to suffer from some form of mental or emotional disorder. The statistics that show up in hospital records are, in fact, thought to be little more than the slim tip of a very large iceberg.

Inferences might be read into the fact that Albertans consume 7–8% more alcohol than other Canadians, and 5% of the popu-

religious practices

Alberta's reputation as the bible belt of Canada—though probably appropriate enough in the days of William Aberhart and his immediate followers—is far from valid today.

Religious affiliation is no longer strong; participation rates in religious functions are even less impressive; and movements (such as inter-marriage) to break down the lines between traditional faiths are in full swing.

In short, Albertans are no longer as religiously oriented as even they might wish to believe. Instead, they are becoming highly secularized; more interested in affluence than religion; and apparently more interested in sect development than in the preservation of traditional denominational affiliations.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF ALBERTANS—SOME INDICATORS

i. About 13% of the population of Edmonton and Calgary profess to have no religious affiliations.

ii. About 60% of the same population are estimated to be non-participants (or very infrequent participants)—even though they claim formal affiliation with a church. (this estimate is based upon the fact that 60% of the sample indicated that they did not attend church during the four weeks prior to Christmas of 1970).

iii. The decline of traditional religious values among Albertans appears to be directly related to the attainment of affluence.

religious practices

epilog

A number of themes or generalizations (most of which are reflected in the statistics) could be extracted from the foregoing report. By way of summary and conclusion, a few of the more manifest of these will be identified and their policy implications discussed.

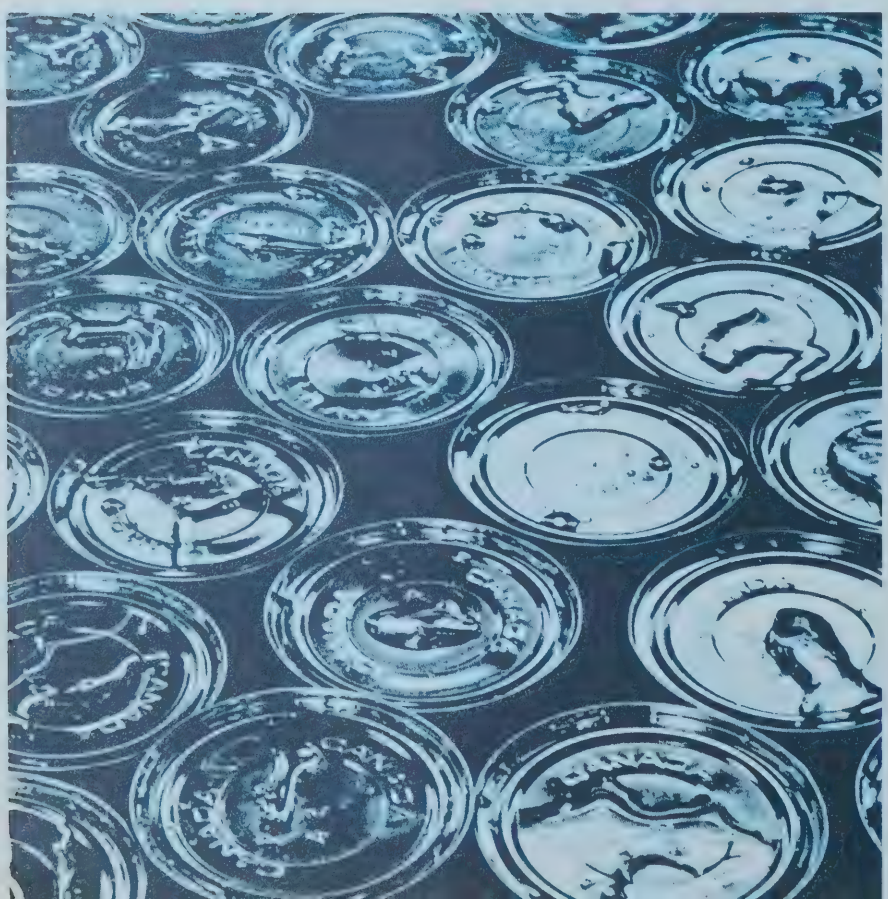
1. PATTERNS OF PUBLIC SPENDING

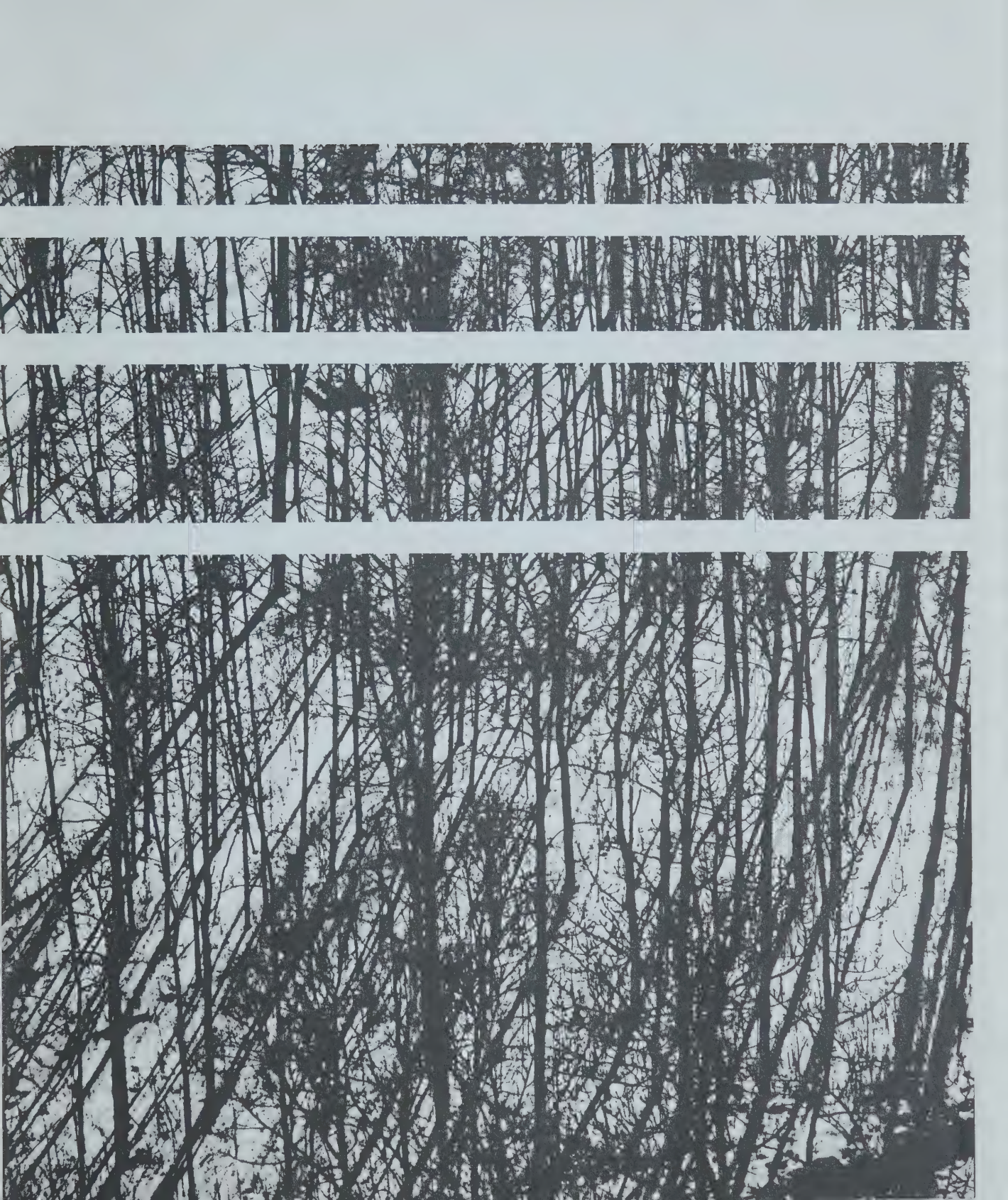
The budget of the Government of Alberta for the current fiscal year ending March 31, 1972, is just under $1,183 million, an increase of $54 million or 4.79% over the previous year.

The big spenders are: *Education,* which will spend over $410.5 million or 34.7% of the budget, an increase of 8.2% over the previous year; and *Health,* which will spend almost $247 million or 20.8% of the budget, an increase of 5.6% over the previous year. These two departments together account for 55% of the total provincial budget.

In contrast, the *Department of the Attorney General,* which is responsible for the whole field of justice, accounts for only 2.3% of the provincial budget; the *Department of Social Development,* which administers the province's welfare programs, accounts for only 7.2%; and the recently formed *Department of the Environment,* has been allocated only 0.9%.

It is difficult, of course, to infer anything very startling from these allocations of public funds. For it is quite conceivable that certain areas, though of highest priority in the government's scheme of things, may require modest budgets to be quite adequately funded, while areas of lower priority may require very large budgets for even a minimal level of operation.





Figures are not yet available to make it possible to compare current amounts of public spending in Alberta with those of other provinces. In 1969, however, per capita gross expenditures in Alberta ($570.00 per capita) were second only to Newfoundland ($614.00 per capita) $72.00 per capita above the national average ($498.00 per capita).

Finally, it is interesting to note that education—which has long been viewed as the sole road to individual success and the major means for the advancement of society—remains the dominant priority in our society's pattern of spending. How long this should or will remain so is today a matter of some conjecture. For there are those who hold that other social problems (poverty, hunger and want, particularly among the very young and the very old; unemployment and income failures, among family bread-winners; and the general deterioration of the environment) should be in strong competition with education for the tax dollar.

The battle has not yet been completely joined. But it surely will be. And the outcome will be one for all citizens to decide.

2. THE HAVES AND THE HAVE NOTS

Though there has been no effort in this study to cross reference the various dimensions of the quality of life in such a way as to determine how various segments of society fare "across the board" as it were, indications are that constellations of characteristics do ascribe to specific groups.

Some individuals and types of individuals tend naturally to fall into ruts of misfortune. They begin their lives in poverty. Their home environments are intellectually and culturally impoverished. As a result, they do not attain well or proceed far in the educational system. Consequently, they remain unemployed—and poor. They reside where they do not have access to adequate health care facilities. Or to recreational opportunities. Or to proper housing. They despair. They set in motion like patterns of life for their offspring. And so the cycle repeats itself.

Other groups are virtually born into good fortune. They become highly educated. They get good returns both from their educational and their financial investments. They enjoy the good life.

Alberta is referred to as one of Canada's "have" provinces. But the fact is that in Alberta there are both "have" and "have not" citizens. This has always been more or less the case, in all societies. The indications are, however, that the gap between the two is becoming wider. And the question must be considered: How wide a gap will be tolerated?

3. THE FUTURE OF THE ECONOMY

As indicated, Alberta is referred to as one of Canada's "have" provinces. But this was not always the case. And there are no guarantees that it will always remain so. Most regions have their economic ups and downs (consider, for example, the experiences of the Prairies and the Maritimes), which tend to persist until and unless the economy becomes so diversified that it can absorb fluctuations in productivity and world markets and shifts in the composition of the labour force.

ALBERTA 1970-1972 PATTERNS OF PUBLIC SPENDING

Expenditures 1970-71					Estimates 1971-72				Increase or Decrease	
Department	Operating	Capital	Total	Percent of Total	Operating	Capital	Total	Percent of Total	Amount	Percent Charge
Agriculture	$ 17,776,094.98	$ 7,465,269.25	$ 25,241,364.23	2.2	$ 14,222,910.00	$ 1,439,620.00	$ 15,662,530.00	1.3	$ 9,578,834.23	37.9
Attorney-General	25,128,121.41		25,128,121.41	2.2	27,620,445.00		27,620,445.00	2.3	(2,492,323.59)	(9.9)
Education	325,449,575.21	54,000,000.00	379,449,575.21	33.6	369,393,000.00	41,249,000.00	410,642,000.00	34.7	(31,192,424.79)	(8.2)
Executive Council	19,259,826.80	1,041,288.68	20,301,115.48	1.8	25,421,634.00	4,202,000.00	29,623,634.00	2.5	(9,322,518.52)	(45.9)
Highways and Transport	47,274,842.53	46,855,231.35	94,130,073.88	8.4	51,212,210.00	55,117,300.00	106,329,510.00	9.0	(12,199,436.12)	(12.9)
Industry and Tourism	3,062,016.58		3,062,016.58	.3	3,551,670.00		3,551,670.00	.3	(489,653.42)	(16.0)
Labour	4,164,792.04		4,164,792.04	.4	4,865,610.00		4,865,610.00	.4	(700,817.96)	(16.8)
Lands and Forests	22,275,488.52	2,101,690.99	24,377,179.51	2.2	20,283,720.00	2,280,670.00	22,564,390.00	1.9	1,812,789.51	7.4
Legislation	3,926,122.21		3,926,122.21	.3	4,408,853.00	53,000.00	4,461,853.00	.4	(535,730.79)	(13.6)
Mines and Minerals	2,159,516.55		2,159,516.55	.2	2,342,980.00		2,342,980.00	.2	(183,463.45)	8.5
Municipal Affairs	5,203,817.03	7,093.60	5,210,910.63	.5	12,673,069.00		12,673,069.00	1.1	(7,462,158.37)	(143.2)
Provincial Secretary	3,706,399.51		3,706,399.51	.3	50,000.00		50,000.00		3,656,399.51	93.6
Public Debt	8,834,499.98	10.00	8,834,509.98	.8	14,819,785.00		14,819,785.00	1.3	(5,985,275.02)	(67.7)
Health	232,161,409.07	1,447,600.00	233,609,009.07	20.7	239,691,950.00	7,000,000.00	246,691,950.00	20.8	(13,082,940.93)	(5.6)
Social Development	88,508,443.17		88,508,443.17	7.8	84,830,704.00		84,830,704.00	7.2	3,677,739.17	4.2
Public Works	31,402,423.84	37,783,377.55	69,185,801.39	6.1	36,771,770.00	54,804,050.00	91,575,820.00	7.7	(22,390,013.61)	(32.3)
Treasury	85,975,896.27	48,813,297.64	134,789,193.91	11.9	87,489,360.00	1,515,000.00	89,004,360.00	7.5	45,784,833.91	33.9
Youth	2,844,489.21		2,844,489.21	.3	5,394,310.00		5,394,310.00	.5	(2,549,820.79)	(89.6)
Environment					4,141,720.00	5,876,600.00	10,018,320.00	.9	(10,018,320.00)	
TOTAL	$929,113,774.91	$199,514,859.06	$1,128,628,633.97	100.0	$1,009,185,700.00	$173,537,240.00	$1,182,722,940.00	100.0	$(54,094,306.03)	(4.79)

Alberta's economy is not broadly diversified. Before the oil strikes of a few decades ago, Alberta's economy was largely agriculture-based, and subjects to all the hazards of unpredictable yields and unstable markets. More recently, the economy has experienced fairly sustained growth, largely as a result of continued productivity in the oil industry and continued demand in the energy market.

But this too could come to an end. And what would happen then to the economy? Secondary industry has not developed at a rapid pace. Indeed, Alberta's so-called labour-intensive industry is already inadequate to absorb available human resources.

The situation seems tenuous at best.

4. HUMAN VALUES AND ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

Throughout this report, there has been a hint that, although our society subscribes verbally to the very best in human values, the behavior of individuals and groups suggests that, when the chips are down, we may be motivated more by the prospect of economic gain that by the ideal of human betterment.

This may seem a harsh indictment. And it is one which would be most difficult to sustain. But the indicators are compelling. Consider a few of them:

Alberta is one of the most rapidly urbanizing regions in the western world. This fact is quoted with some pride and considerable satisfaction by the province's various urban promoters. But when one asks why this is so, how it has come about, and why so many people are so pleased about the development, one comes up with some troublesome possibilities. Could it be that the lure of private investment with its attendant concentration of industry and profit is the real raison d'etre of the urban centre? If urban centres had other primary goals (such as satisfying lives for people) might they not take different forms and follow different patterns of growth?

Closely related to this is the matter of housing—particularly urban housing. This basic human need is met primarily through the actions of private investors—at considerable profit to themselves and at considerable financial hardship to many (if not most) of the consumers. The question might be posed: Are housing developments in this province shaped by the wants and needs of the people—or by the economic motives of the developers?

A final example: it has been found (in a recent study of hospital utilization patterns conducted for HRRC) that the number of patient days spent in hospitals is largely determined by doctors—and that the number of days spent by various patients for various illnesses correlates highly with the financial advantage which accrues to the doctors as a result of the longer or shorter stays.

These cases are by no means conclusive evidence that Alberta is a predominantly "dog-eat-dog" society. But they are sufficiently troublesome to give one pause, to cause one to ask: *How can a society, in the interests of justice and humanity, protect the weak from the strong, the meek from the aggressive—and at the same time, in the interests of progress, encourage its builders, its shapers, and its developers to be imaginative and bold and entrepreneurial, and provide the leadership that is required?*

DATE DUE
DATE DE RETOUR

JAN 29 1982

LOWE-MARTIN No. 1137

11507 – 74 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Telephone 433-2541

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

MAR 30 '76

APR 19 1976